Province of British Columbia
MINISTRY OF ATTORNEY GENERAL

1994/1995
Annual Report
on
MULTICULTURALISM

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1994–1995 Annual Report on MULTICULTURALISM

Statement from Deputy Minister

I am pleased to present the Ministry of Attorney General's second annual report on Multiculturalism. This report, which covers the period from April 1, 1994, to March 31, 1995, presents an account of the way the Ministry of Attorney General is responding to the needs of British Columbia's cultural minorities.

As the Ministry principally responsible for law and the administration of justice in our province, the Ministry of Attorney General must not only provide equal access to programs and services but also ensure that all Ministry activities reflect an awareness of and a commitment to the principles of fairness and equality. Over the past year our commitment to the principles enshrined in the *Multiculturalism Act* of British Columbia has led to an increased understanding of the issues flowing from the diverse realities of our population. It has also led to an increased awareness of the inter-relationships between cultural, racial and gender-based discrimination. These complex inter-relationships present this ministry with a significant challenge as they raise fundamental questions about the way we carry out our mandate. Nevertheless, it is a challenge we accept.

As a province and as a Ministry we continue to learn from the variety of experiences and traditions that make up the diverse multicultural society of British Columbia. We continue to learn from the people we serve. The progress demonstrated in this report is only the beginning of our response to the challenges we face.

Maureen A. Maloney
Deputy Minister

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Preamble

The Ministry of Attorney General is responsible for the administration of justice within British Columbia. Justice services are delivered to the entire populace through a wide range of mechanisms, many of which are specifically adapted for the special needs of those in remote areas, those whose first language is not English, and for people who may experience barriers because of disabilities, age, poverty or for other reasons. As the population changes and comes to expect a higher standard of delivery of justice services to all people, the Ministry strives to review and improve its administration of justice by increasing the involvement of communities in partnerships with the Ministry.

The 1994-95 Ministry of Attorney General's Annual Report on Multiculturalism summarizes many of these initiatives. However, it does not reflect those initiatives which are intended to address the needs and concerns of the Aboriginal people of B.C. It is the view of the Ministry that there are distinct legal and social issues resulting from the different nature of multicultural and Aboriginal populations.

While the term "multicultural" encompasses all of the cultures within a population, the focus of this report is on two types of communities:

- relatively recent immigrants to Canada who encounter barriers when using the justice system because of cultural factors; and

- ethnic minorities of long standing who may have a distinct cultural identity.

This annual report includes activities undertaken by the Ministry as both an employer and provider of services, as well as initiatives in which we have participated with our justice partners, such as the police and the judiciary.

Corporate Commitment and Communication

The Ministry of Attorney General expresses its commitment to ensuring that all British Columbians enjoy fair and equitable access to justice both through explicit statements and policies, and through the funding and delivery of services designed to meet the needs of the diversity of its populace.

The Honourable Colin Gabelmann, Attorney General, stated in the 1992-93 Annual Report of the Ministry of Attorney General:

> *We are inviting British Columbia's communities to play a larger role in the justice system. Another major priority of the Ministry has been to improve the way the justice system treats those whom it has not served well in the past: Aboriginal people, women, visible minorities and people with disabilities.*

In a widely distributed publication on employment equity, the Attorney General further expressed his intent to rid the Ministry of both intentional and systemic discrimination in the workplace. This brochure states that:

> *The Ministry of Attorney General is committed to ensuring the elimination of any unfair barriers in employment policies and procedures.*

In an address to the Law Courts Education Society in November 1993, the Deputy Minister, Maureen A. Maloney, commented on the Ministry's efforts to open up the justice system to all British Columbians, stating that:

> *Our province's rich variety of cultural traditions is a great treasure. We must work hard to ensure that the creativity and dedication of all citizens are supported and encouraged, and that our institutions, including the justice system, have the confidence of all British Columbians.*

Corporate support for diversity and the elimination of inequities in the workplace was urged by E. Robert Edwards, then Deputy Attorney General, in October 1992, in a memo to all Ministry employees:

> *Every employee is expected, in the way she or he deals with co-workers or with members of the public, to reflect our Ministry's respect for all individuals regardless of racial or ethnic background, gender or disability. Your support and cooperation are essential to our success with this initiative.*

In 1994-95, corporate support for diversity and employment equity led to the development of a new Equity and Staff Development Section within the Human Resources Division. In announcing these changes, Deputy Minister Maureen A. Maloney stated:

> *After several years of developing the Employment Equity Program and an awareness of issues around recruitment, training, promotion and work environment for historically disadvantaged groups, it is now time to integrate the program with operational issues....These changes will provide a focus on individual and corporate needs as we develop our human resources and take action to have a ministry work force representative of the people we serve.*

By adopting employment equity as one of its strategic priorities, the Ministry of Attorney General has affirmed its commitment to improving the justice system for all people. Equity initiatives include, but are not confined to, multicultural issues. The Ministry's interim action plan for multicultural issues, adopted in November 1993, articulates a goal of fairness and equitable treatment for all ethnocultural minorities.

Goals and Objectives

The Ministry of Attorney General has a broad range of initiatives relevant to multicultural justice issues, needs and services. These initiatives are not limited to visible minorities. Although it is true that visible minorities are more likely than Caucasians to experience overt discrimination as a result of racist attitudes, not all cultural communities with special needs are visible minorities. In some cases, cultural values and traditions, rather than the visible minority status, results in unfair treatment.

As stated earlier, the Ministry's interim action plan for multicultural issues articulates a goal of fairness and equitable treatment for ethnocultural minorities. The plan also outlines a strategy for identifying the diverse needs of a wide range of ethnocultural communities in B.C. and provides specific directions where these needs have already been identified.

The action plan states the following goal:

> *To make the justice system more equitable, fair and responsive to the unique needs of the various cultural communities of B.C., including, but not limited to, visible minorities, immigrants, Aboriginal people and subcultures within each of these cultures.*

The action plan also states the following objectives of the Ministry's response to the needs of a multicultural British Columbia.

The justice system must:

- identify justice issues and existing responses to multicultural communities;
- ensure equal access to justice programs and employment;
- promote equality in the use of discretion throughout the criminal justice process;
- assist cultural minorities in crime prevention within their communities;
- promote fair treatment of cultural and visible minorities by the police; and
- ensure that justice institutions have policies and programs which meet the needs of cultural and visible minorities.

Review of Structures, Programs, Services, Policies and Legislation

IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURES

The following structures of the Ministry of Attorney General have, as their primary focus, a mandate to develop or implement policies, programs and research designed to identify and respond to the needs of ethnocultural communities:

- Ethnocultural Equality Working Group
- Employment Equity Division
- Provincial Committee on Police and Visible Minority Relations

The Ministry of Attorney General also has a wide range of committees which are engaged in identifying and responding to the needs of ethnocultural communities within a broader mandate of responsibility. These include, but are not limited to the following:

- Inter-ministerial Committee on Criminal Gangs
- Family Justice Reform Committee
- Violence Against Women and Children Committee
- Literature Review Committee
- Working Group on Gender Equality

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The Ministry provides some direct services to cultural communities within its justice institutions. The Ministry provides finding support to community police stations, one of which is designed to serve the needs of the Chinese community in Vancouver.

The Ministry funds a variety of community agencies which provide services to people from cultural minority communities including: the Law Courts Education Society, the People's Law School, the Legal Services Society, as well as to programs such as the Victim Assistance Programs. Services

and information are provided in multiple languages, with attention to culturally-appropriate delivery. The funded agencies are valuable resources to the Ministry in terms of providing information about community needs and priorities. In some cases, they act as advisory groups when specific policy or program issues arise.

POLICIES

The following is a brief summary of the major policy activities undertaken by the Ministry of Attorney General to address multicultural issues. This summary is not comprehensive.

National Level:

The Ministry of Attorney General and the federal Department of Justice co-chair a national working group on multicultural justice issues. This committee, the Working Group on Multicultural and Race Relations in the Justice System, is a subcommittee of the Coordinating Committee of Senior Officials (CCSO). The CCSO has representation from all justice ministries in Canada and reports to the Deputy Ministers Responsible for Justice.

The Working Group has defined broad areas of concern, and is undertaking policy reviews, legal and empirical research, and pilot projects to address these areas.

In 1994-95, the Ministry of Attorney General co-authored a report on hate-motivated activity in Canada.

Inter-ministry Level:

The Ministry of Attorney General is a member of the Inter-ministry Multiculturalism Committee. This Committee provides cross-ministry information sharing on issues, such as training for cultural competency, and existing programs and services. It also reviews policy issues relevant to multiculturalism. The Ministry is also a participant on the Interim Committee on Immigration Policy.

The Ministry of Attorney General is a member of the Inter-ministry Committee on Elder Abuse which in 1994-95 successfully completed a study of programs and services available to multicultural seniors.

Ministry Level:

Where policy or program issues have implications for more than one branch of the Ministry, the central Policy Division becomes involved. The Ethnocultural Equality Working Group meets to review issues and priorities for the Ministry. Examples of the Working Group's activities include a review of the issues pertinent to the new *Multiculturalism Act*, management of research projects (on jury selection, representation

of ethnocultural minorities in correctional facilities) and development of positions on issues raised at the inter-ministry or national level.

Through the Ministry Working Group on Gender Equality, the Special Advisor on Gender Equality is supporting workshops to address the legal needs of ethnocultural minority women including public legal education and information on issues of violence against women and children.

Branch Level:

Within the Ministry of Attorney General, each branch is responsible for developing policies which address its own operational requirements. As an example, Court Services Branch has developed policies on court interpreters. Police Services Division (which is now a division within the Public Safety and Regulatory Branch) has developed policy recommendations regarding the uniform regulations of the *Police Act* to allow variations on existing uniforms for religious reasons (e.g., Sikh turbans). Corrections Branch has supported research to determine whether there are policy or program requirements to address the needs of cultural minority youth on probation.

REVIEWS, RESEARCH AND EVALUATIONS

The Ministry has either undertaken or contributed substantively to the following reviews and research to identify multicultural needs within the Ministry and the justice system:

- the Employment Equity initiative of the B.C. Provincial Government (which has identified four designated groups: visible minorities, persons with disabilities, women, and Aboriginal people);
- two research projects to identify and respond to the legal needs of ethnocultural minority women in situations of domestic violence;
- a census and review of the needs of youth on probation in the Lower Mainland; and
- a comprehensive study on elder abuse which profiled the abuse undergone by ethnocultural seniors and the programs and services available to them.

LEGISLATION, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Equal Access to Justice:

B.C has a large immigrant population, some of whom experience language and cultural barriers in understanding the law and using the justice system.

The Ministry of Attorney General and its funded agencies continually monitor the effectiveness of programs and resources designed to reach out to these communities and ensure that information is accessible by those who may experience these barriers.

- British Columbia continues to expand its delivery of multicultural public legal education and information programs. Information about the laws, the justice system and specifically the courts has been translated and interpreted to meet the needs of various immigrant-based communities. Under the Ministry's new victims of crime legislation, passed by the Legislature in 1995, the government affirms a commitment to affording victims throughout British Columbia equal access to interpreters for speakers of any language and culturally-sensitive services for members of ethnocultural minorities.

- Race relations initiatives include intercultural education for justice personnel (including police, court workers and other Ministry of Attorney General staff) as well as for visible minority community members. The Ministry has assisted local police departments in preventing harassment and discrimination both within the departments and between the police and the communities they serve.

Discretion:

Little is known in B.C. about the particular way the justice system affects people from multicultural communities or people who are visible minorities. It is possible that people who experience cultural or racial barriers may be treated differently at certain discretion points, such as arrest, sentencing, jury selection or parole.

The Ministry of Attorney General's Ethnocultural Equality Working Committee is working with the national Working Group on Multicultural and Race Relations in the Justice System to identify and carry out priority empirical research to determine the nature and extent of systemic bias in the justice system.

CRIME PREVENTION

In 1994-95, the Community Justice Branch made substantial efforts to publish community crime prevention materials (e.g., A Woman Alone, information on protecting a residence, etc.) into languages appropriate for ethnocultural communities, including Punjabi, Cantonese and Spanish.

The Community Justice Branch also provided a sizable grant to assist in opening a tri-cities multicultural crime prevention centre in Coquitlam. Co-sponsored by the Port Moody police department, the R.C.M.P. and S.U.C.C.E.S.S., the centre provides crime prevention community policing services to the Asian community in the Port Coquitlam/Port Moody area.

The Youth Programs Division, Gang and Youth Crime Prevention Program helps address issues of youth involvement in crime, including issues affecting ethnocultural minority youth. Through the Inter-ministerial Committee on Criminal Gangs and the Youth Advisory Committee emerging issues, needs, programs and services for these communities are identified and supported. These include:

- grants to youth groups and communities, including multicultural organizations, for youth crime prevention initiatives;
- supporting Settlement Grants Program funding in several communities for employment and trade programs for immigrant youth;
- supporting the revision and printing of information such as 'Learning About the Law', a guide to the law and justice system of Canada, which has been printed in Chinese, Vietnamese, Punjabi and Spanish;
- support to the Vancouver Police Department and other municipal police forces to enhance their School Liaison Officer Program;
- the Youth Against Violence contact line (1-800-680-GANG), a toll-free, province-wide telephone service that provides youth with a safe and confidential way to get help and share information about youth violence and crime;
- 841-KOZ, a youth theatre group, travels the province providing students and youth with information on violence issues and the incidence of youth violence, fear and victimization, and encouraging youth to take a stand by becoming involved in preventing youth violence in their schools and communities; and
- development of videos, manuals and other resources dealing with youth violence, including issues facing ethnocultural minority youth and encouraging community-based prevention strategies.

POLICE

Municipal Police Departments and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in the province continue to be responsive to the goals and objectives of the *Multiculturalism Act* of British Columbia. Part of this responsiveness is a continuing emphasis on the importance of attracting recruits from the various ethnic and cultural communities throughout the province as well as the importance of providing intercultural education.

The Report of the Oppal Commission on Policing identified a number of specific issues which require further examination. These include the following:

- The Commission observed that there has been a lack of progress with respect to representation in policing by visible minorities in spite of stated policies. The Commission made a number of

recommendations with respect to systemic obstacles to employment that are being examined by the Ministry's implementation committee.

- The Ministry Project Committee on Police and Visible Minority Relations consisting of community groups and police has assisted in the development of policies and training for policing. They continue to examine issues and feasible policy initiatives.

- Both the Municipal Departments and the R.C.M.P. are represented on the committee and have developed a joint strategy to improve relations between the police and the minority communities they serve. Meetings are being held to broaden representation of the various communities.

- The Ministry continues to sponsor intercultural education for the police through the Justice Institute of British Columbia. The South East Asia Cultural Awareness Project (SEACAP) has held two Asian culture education sessions for police officers. A third session is planned for the early Fall of 1995.

- In addition to the three Chinese-speaking Special Constables hired by the Coordinated Law Enforcement Unit (CLEU), a Vietnamese-speaking Special Constable has been added to CLEU Vancouver. Their language and cultural expertise have provided improved cooperation with Asian communities and increased law enforcement effectiveness.

CRIMINAL CODE OFFENCES

B.C. continues to experience the consequences of extremist groups. In addition to operating a racist 'hotline', which provides taped messages to callers, these groups have also resorted to the Internet to disseminate hate-motivated materials. The groups have also allegedly recruited high school students to their organizations. Racist acts, such as vandalism of churches and hate propaganda, have caused community concern, and prompted a call for changes to the *Criminal Code* to assist the police in responding to these events.

The Ministry of Attorney General is working with the national Working Group on Multicultural and Race Relations to determine the nature of hate-motivated activity and to monitor the effectiveness of Bill C-41, the Federal Sentencing Bill, and the amendment which makes hate-motivation an aggravating factor in sentencing.

COURT PROCESS

Because many people in British Columbia do not speak English as a first language, the Ministry is committed to improving the availability of information about the courts and to improving court interpretation, in terms of both the number of interpreters available and the standards for training and certifying interpreters. The Ministry strives to ensure that interpreters and culturally-appropriate court information are made available to both offenders and victims.

Some justice system personnel have raised concerns regarding witnesses from multicultural communities, specifically about difficulties in getting witnesses to participate in the justice process, and ensuring that witnesses obtain necessary information in a language which they can understand.

- The Ministry has developed policies for court interpretation and has established standards for accrediting interpreters. A differential fee schedule encourages interpreters to seek accreditation.

- The Ministry supports a major court information and education program which assists multicultural and Aboriginal communities in obtaining information which they need to use the justice system.

- The Ministry has partially funded a pilot project aimed at increasing accredited interpreters in languages where interpreter shortages exist. Vancouver Community College will be piloting an intensive training program in 1995.

VICTIM SERVICES

Victim Services Division of the Community Justice Branch has supported numerous projects to respond to the needs of ethnocultural minorities including:

- Services for victims of crime such as a women's program at MOSAIC in Vancouver which provides services to women victims of spousal assault and the Indo-Canadian Specialized Victim Assistance Program provided through Abbotsford Community Services. This program provides justice-related information and support to Indo-Canadian victims of child sexual assault, spousal assault and adult sexual assault. The program gathers relevant information from police and Crown counsel and gives the victim information on a one-to-one basis. Assistance to victims may include receiving written material, visits to Crown counsel, a court tour, accompaniment to preliminary hearings and trials, and assistance with Criminal Injury Compensation and Victim Impact forms. All of these services are provided in both Punjabi and Hindi.

- Several contracted agencies have provided services to women in other languages by hiring workers within their organizations that speak other languages. Some short-term positions have concentrated on how to serve women of colour. Several agencies also provide materials on relevant topics, such as sexual assault, in other languages (Vancouver Women Against Violence Against Women [WAVAW] and Battered Women's Support Services [BWSS]).

- Vancouver WAVAW, a funded specialized victim service and sexual assault centre, runs a Sexual Assault Survivor Support Group for women of colour and sends a mailout to 200 agencies promoting the group. WAVAW also hired two workers in September 1994, for six months, to do accessibility work such as translating current pamphlets into plain language and translating publications into Hindi and Punjabi. A WAVAW member has also done outreach with the Iranian-Canadian community including various media contacts, public education sessions and workshops.

- BWSS actively seeks volunteer trainees who reflect the community composition in response to multiculturalism. BWSS is a collective which involves women of colour as members. The organization also has a Multicultural committee which is developing a set of principles for agencies aimed at making their services accessible to immigrant women.

- The Ministry has developed a policy on violence against women in relationships and is in the process of developing policies on sexual assault and child sexual abuse. All of these policies acknowledge the dynamics of abuse but stress that consideration must be given to the cultural context within which the abuse takes place. The violence against women in relationships policy indicates that justice system personnel must be sensitive to the concerns or needs of all women, including women of colour, immigrant and refugee women.

- Agencies have access to victim services information pamphlets available in several languages (French, Punjabi and Cantonese) at Victim Services Division. Victim services workers are provided with a variety of victims of crime handbooks relevant to sexual assault, child abuse and spousal assault. The handbooks encourage trainees to recognize their cultural attitudes and beliefs and how they can influence agency service to victims. Victim service workers are also provided with travel/training subsidies in order to attend workshops on relevant topics which could include multicultural applications.

- The Ministry sits on an advisory committee to the Law Courts Education Society wife assault project. The Society has sought information from immigrant and visible minority women who have been victims of spousal assault in order to deign information programs for immigrant women and training programs for settlement workers (with funding from the Federal Department of Justice and Heritage Canada). Service workers have been interviewed to ascertain their views and experiences as service providers and to give their ideas on client training needs for settlement workers. The findings from this research will also be taken into account in the development of Ministry training programs and materials.

- The Victim Services Division also assisted in sponsoring the B.C. Institute on Family Violence, Cross-Cultural Perspectives Conference which took place in February 1995.

CORRECTIONS

Although a number of policy and program initiatives have been provided in support of Aboriginal inmates, little was known in the past about the needs of multicultural and visible minority inmates in B.C. Correctional facilities. These needs may include cross-cultural training for personnel, policies regarding religious observances or diet needs, language training for inmates who do not speak English (particularly youth), and policies which may assist the facilities in dealing with incidents of racism.

The 1993 Census of Provincial Correctional Centres conducted by the Ministry provided baseline information on the representation of ethnic communities in correctional facilities and an assessment of the perceived needs of these prisoners, both from their point of view and that of the staff. Corrections Branch has developed and is acting on a plan for responding to these issues and the recommendations emerging from the research. In addition, the following points are worth noting:

- Current Corrections Branch policy allows cultural practices (e.g., dietary, dress) unless these practices pose a health or safety risk. For example, baptized Sikhs are not allowed to wear kirpans in correctional facilities but may substitute photographs of kirpans. While a photograph is the most commonly-used substitute, other types of replicas may also be acceptable.

- Culturally-appropriate programming for inmates continues to be a priority. One youth centre has also added an E.S.L. and transition service for ethnocultural minorities to its school curriculum.

- Chaplains arrange for attendance of spiritual leaders from other religions for those who are not Christian. This may be regularly scheduled or as needed, depending upon demand.

- The emphasis on intercultural education continues with activities including a race awareness workshop for all staff at two youth custody centres and an annual multicultural day for both residents and staff sponsored by another centre. With an increasing Asian population among inmates, staff from two adult centres participated in appropriate training and further training in this area has been recommended. Some youth institutions have incorporated ethnocultural issues into their school programs, life-skills training and psychological services.

- Corrections Branch has four culturally-specific programs for assaultive husbands. These programs are designed to be particularly suited both to the language and the traditions of the affected communities.

- The census research reported allegations of racist interchanges between inmates and, to a lesser extent, between staff and inmates. Responses to this include disciplining inmates or residents who are found to be engaging in racist verbal exchange and/or abuse. Similarly, staff who engage in such behaviour will also face disciplinary action. One youth centre has issued a policy of "zero-tolerance" of such behaviour.

- To facilitate longer-term planning in response to the census, one Region has held meetings with representatives of the Canadian Anti-Racism Education and Research Society (CARES) to explore ways to better address the needs of ethnocultural minorities in correctional facilities. Suggestions include developing a resource guide regarding community contracts for ethnocultural minorities, translating written materials into different languages, and increasing the representation of ethnocultural minorities among correctional staff.

CIVIL LAW

The Ministry has approved in principle an Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy in which the Ministry affirms a commitment to justice and conflict resolution environment which includes a wide range of dispute resolution options. One of these options is the use of dispute resolution methods tailored to the cultural traditions of the population.

Recent reports have identified needs of members of multicultural communities in the area of family law. Issues include problems of access to services as well as a need for information about family court processes.

The Ministry provides court interpreters for Provincial Court (Family) matters, and continues to explore ways to better meet the needs of multicultural communities in the family law area.

The Family Maintenance Enforcement Program provides enrollment and public information materials in English, Punjabi and Cantonese, and, in 1994-95, has produced these materials in Spanish, Vietnamese and French.

As part of the Family Justice Reform Pilot Project in Kitimat, Kamloops, Burnaby/New Westminster, and Nicola Valley (for Aboriginal communities), programs and services to address the needs of families of different cultures are being demonstrated.

AWARENESS/EDUCATION SESSIONS

As noted throughout this report, the Ministry is engaged in a variety of education and awareness initiatives relevant to multiculturalism. These efforts include employment equity programs and materials (as discussed below) and educational sessions for staff engaged in provision of service to the public. For example, members of the police and the judiciary have well-developed intercultural education curricula and intercultural education sessions have been provided for court personnel.

In 1994-95, the Court Services Branch in partnership with the Law Courts Education Society planned a Diversity Awareness Program for the Branch. The program, which will be introduced over a five-year period, builds on existing cultural sensitization initiatives throughout the branch to both reinforce and reflect the government's commitment to diversity and employment equity. The framework includes the provision of resource materials to conduct cultural sensitization events in the communities and to conduct workshops in which staff will generate action plans encompassing factors identified by the program. The action plans will then be implemented at the local registry level.

In addition to providing justice personnel with information and education regarding the needs of the multicultural communities, the Ministry of Attorney General has a long tradition of ensuring that members of the public who may experience cultural or language barriers in accessing justice services are given particular attention through multicultural public legal education and information

resource development and program delivery. Culturally appropriate and translated information about the laws, the justice system and specifically the course is widely available in various immigrant-based communities.

In 1994-95, the People's Law School completed a two-year demonstration project titled the Immigrant Seniors Legal Education Project. Partially funded and supported by the Ministry of Attorney General, the project worked with seniors in the Chinese, Hispanic, South Asian, Vietnamese and Iranian communities to create a community needs-driven model for the delivery of legal education to immigrant seniors and their service-providers.

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

The Ministry of Attorney General supports employment equity and is committed to achieving a workforce that is representative of the diverse population it serves. In 1994-95, the Ministry has demonstrated its support for the employment equity program through letters from the Executive Committee to all employees, the establishment of a Ministry Employment Equity Steering Committee, the delivery of Employment Equity Awareness sessions to most employees throughout the Ministry and distribution of a video, a computerized show, memos and brochures to all employees.

In 1994, the Equity Program was expanded to include Staff Development with the mandate to coordinate corporate training initiatives to improve services. Training initiatives included sessions on Employment Equity Awareness, Harassment Policy (Information, Prevention and Resolution), Valuing Diversity, Sexual Orientation, Taking Charge of Your Career, Workforce Profiles and Working With Persons with Disabilities.

In addition to the above training initiatives, the Equity and Staff Development Section offered awareness and educational sessions on equity-related topics. For a session titled Gaining Knowledge of Living in a Diverse Community, 28 employees attended a day workshop at the Sikh Temple and participated in group discussions and presentations by six different culture groups.

As of January 1, 1994, visible minorities made up 3.8% of the Ministry's workforce, 10.5% of the external workforce and 14.2% of the population. Visible minorities are under-represented at all levels of the Ministry, and are concentrated in the supervisory and clerical levels. As part of the Ministry's Equity Action Plan, measures to improve the representativeness of the Ministry's workforce include:

- a competency-based selection process to help remove systemic barriers and provide equal access to career opportunities,
- cultural awareness and recruitment and selection training with an equity perspective for managers and supervisors responsible for hiring staff, and
- outreach strategies including a resource fair to provide a recruitment network between managers and agencies representing the designated groups.

Overview of Process

The Ministry of Attorney General devotes a significant level of staff time and resources to ensuring that the Ministry as both employer and service provider reflects the principles which are articulated in the *Multiculturalism Act.*

As we review our process, we recognize that there are additional needs which must be addressed. The Ministry continues to review its management of equity and diversity activities, and intends to develop structural options for ensuring that our activities in this area are maximally effective for the resources available.

As the population of British Columbia continues to change, the Ministry of Attorney General will strive to ensure that the justice needs of all British Columbians are recognized and addressed.